

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on September 7, 2004, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9, 11-13, 16-17, and 20-22 are amended, claim 3 is canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1-2, and 4-23 are now pending in this application.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant respectfully requests that a copy of the 1449 Form, listing all references that were submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 10, 2003, marked as being considered and initialled by the Examiner, be returned with the next official communication.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-2, 5-6, 9, 11-15, 17-19, and 21-22 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Katayama (U.S. Patent No. 6,209,987).

The Examiner cited Figure 4 of Katayama as teaching printing non-uniform passes per raster in a contiguous vertical block of rasters. Applicant respectfully submits that Katayama does not describe non-uniform passes per raster in a contiguous vertical block of rasters.

Katayama appears to describe a method of forming an image including horizontally scanning a single area more than once. For example, with regard to Figure 4, Katayama appears to describe performing two horizontal scans, if the number of print divisions is two, by printing 50% on the first scan and the other 50% on the second scan (column 2, lines 9-30). Whatever print division is selected each of the raster scans receives the same number of passes. Katayama does not describe printing non-uniform passes per raster nor “printing a number of raster passes which is a non-integer multiple of a minimum number of raster passes used to print each raster once,” as defined by Applicant’s specification. For example, in Katayama if the desired vertical resolution is 1200 DPI and the printhead resolution is 300 DPI, the minimum number of raster passes used to print each raster once is four ($1200 \text{ DPI} / 300 \text{ DPI} = 4$). In Katayama, if the print division is 4 (25% per pass), then each of the rasters will receive 4 passes for a total of 16 passes over the four raster lines in

order to achieve the necessary DPI. Thus, Katayama does not describe non-uniform passes per raster in a contiguous vertical block of rasters.

In contrast, Applicant's disclosure describes non-uniform passes per raster in a contiguous vertical block of rasters, e.g., different rasters in the contiguous vertical block receive different numbers of passes. Moreover, in at least one of the Applicant's embodiments, e.g., as shown in Figure 2A, a non-integer multiple (5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11...rather than just 4, 8, 12, 16, etc.) of the minimum number of raster passes used to print each raster once can be achieved. For example, if minimum number of raster passes used to print each raster once is four (1200 DPI / 300 DPI = 4), Applicant's claimed embodiment will facilitate printing non-integer multiples (e.g., 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11) of this minimum. That is, Applicant's Figure 2A depicts an embodiment in which six passes are used (odd rasters get one physical nozzle pass and even rasters get two physical nozzle passes) within a contiguous block of vertical rasters.

In the interest of furthering the present prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21-22 to capture aspects of this allowable embodiment, as acknowledged by the Examiner in connection with claim 3. The independent claims, as amended, each recite performing a number of raster passes which is a non-integer multiple of a minimum number of raster passes used to print each raster once. Applicant reserves the right to pursue additional claimable subject matter in a continuation filing at a later date. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejection for independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21-22, as well as those claims which depend therefrom, in view of the same.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3-4, 7, 8, 10, 16, 20, and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging allowable subject matter contained in claims 3-4, 7, 8, 10, 16, 20, and 23. Subject from claim 3 has been incorporated into each of the Applicant's independent claims.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (360) 212-0769 to facilitate prosecution of this matter.

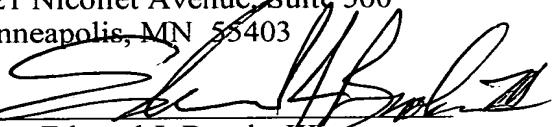
At any time during the pendency of this application, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to the Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR §1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: MS AMENDMENT Commissioner for Patents, P.O. BOX 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 6th day of December, 2004.

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